

DNRP 2011 Equity and Social Justice Accomplishments - Narrative summary v12-6-11

Objective 1:

Consider equity impacts in all decision-making:

DNRP's Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) helped drive ESJ considerations into multi-stakeholder Lower Duwamish River clean-up alternatives analysis, and is supporting Health Impact Assessment efforts in affected communities. WTD also completed an equity assessment of pump station design and construction practices to ensure fairness in mitigation levels for these capital investments.

DNRP's Solid Waste Division further institutionalized ESJ through proposed updates to the King County Solid Waste Management Comprehensive Plan. ESJ policy improvements address green building, waste collection, transfer station siting, and the breadth of representation on advisory committees.

A shared struggle across DNRP Divisions (in considering equity impacts on all decision making) is ensuring broad community representation on advisory committees. Rather than each Division trying to solve this dilemma independently, this challenge may be best addressed centrally through the ESJ Inter-Branch Team (IBT).

Objective 2:

Build community trust and capacity; Improve customer service; robust civic engagement

DNRP's Parks Division won and implemented a grant to conduct focus groups and outreach surveys to learn more about the drivers of customer satisfaction. The division worked successfully to ensure representation of underserved residents in these outreach efforts. The Solid Waste Division expanded Spanish language recycling outreach and education and supported the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in Korean Dry Cleaner engagement.

The Water and Land Resources Division, through a Public Health Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant, expanded supplemental nutrition assistance use at Farmer's Markets so that now more than 8 King County farmers markets and at least 45 farmer vendors accept SNaP and Women, Infant, Children fruit and vegetable checks and/or Washington Basic Food electronic benefit (EBT) cards. The Rivers and Floodplain Management team initiated language translation to assist non-English speaking customers who call for flood information. During a flood event, this service is available 24 hours a day. In addition, flood safety videos in the top 21 languages spoken in King County as well as American Sign Language have been prepared.

The Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) applied the Community Engagement Guide to all relevant capital projects, including the Ballard Siphon project and will apply the Guide to the Sunset/Healthfield and Lakeland Hills projects as they reach the appropriate point in the project management process. WTD updated its capital project Initial Needs Assessment form (so that translation needs are considered for every project), established an on-call verbal translation contract (for use at public meetings and during emergencies), and translated several key WTD publications into Spanish.

Objective 3:

Promote fairness and opportunity in County government practices:

a) Internal communications/ coordination to raise awareness and visibility of ESJ in communication and within depts./branches

The DNRP Director communicated with all department staff regarding the ESJ Ordinance and department-wide efforts. Divisions have raised awareness through messages from directors, posters, presentations and engagements with work units. The Local Hazardous Waste Management Program delivered staff training on cultural competence and community engagement.

DNRP has determined that a team, with representatives from each division, will be most effective in coordinating consistent messages on ESJ to all staff and better leverage resources for department-wide ESJ efforts. Engagement tools/channels being utilized include listening sessions, posters, and leadership messages.

b) Each dept./branch commits to structures and mechanisms to deepen employee awareness, learning, and continuous improvement supports to institutionalize equity in all services

Parks has begun the long-term process of coordinating training a team to educate field staff on the ESJ ordinance/efforts, and facilitate discussions on the role(s) that the Parks Division can play. Early lesson here is that this is a slow process to implement (requiring time and resources), but there is significant enthusiasm and support for this bottom-up approach.

DNRP formed the ESJ team to coordinate employee awareness, learning, and continuous improvement. The DNRP ESJ team held coordination meetings to help build momentum. Using multiple channels will help with the challenge of internal engagement that connects DNRP leadership with staff.